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BROTHER JONATHAN'S EPISTLE.

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BROTHER JONATHAN'S EPISTLE

TO HIS

R E L A T I O N S

ON BOTH SIDES OF THE ATLANTIC, BUT CHIEFLY TO HIS FATHER,
JOHN BULL, BROTHER JONATHAN BEING A LEETLE RILED BY
THE REMARKS MADE BY JOHN BULL AT HIS SMALL
WARES DISPLAYED AT THE OPENING OF THE
GRAND EXHIBITION.

"The princely revel may survey
Our rustic dance with scorn."

B O S T O N :
WHITE AND POTTER, PRINTERS
1852.

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IN EXCHANGE

Best. 1000

FRANKLIN D.
WILSON

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BROTHER JONATHAN'S EPISTLE.

May sycophantic adulation
To her, our honest parent nation,
Pass from a Freeman's contemplation .
Even for a minute—
When people starve to rear taxation,
There 's something in it.

What if her ocean-cradled Isles
Have reared a front of ready wiles,
Unconquered yet by frowns or smiles :
Just rest contented ;
'The same old stuff' three thousand miles
We 've brought and mended.

The thorny shoot she gave a lift
To Holland, by some curious shift
Got planted in a wintry drift
On Plymouth rock ;
Down went the roots right through the rift,
And here 's the stock.

John Bull, you laugh, in proud emotion
At our small wares sent o'er the ocean—
From all our famous clockwork motion :
 So small a sight ;
But to my own plain Yankee notion
 We 're in the right.

We keep on our much-laughed-at shore
What we have gathered, less or more,
With slight pretence—a native ore
 Of true invention,
To swell your vaunted palace store
 Make no pretension.

To Yankee, when he makes his book,
The profit has a queersome look ;
Just cypher out by hook or crook
 What Yankee gains,
By meeting you in yonder nook,
 Beneath the panes.

A lesson to the odd conceit,
That thinks his nation can 't be beat,
I 'll grant, by gazing at the neat
 Array of things,
With which, at present to compete,
 Would strain his wings.

But nothing more—with stuff to spare,
From golden ore to wooden ware ;
He fears you 've done, with *cunning* care,
 Your work of grace ;
So only means to nick his share
 Before your face.

He 'll take a peep at every tray,
And startle you some future day,
When your old head is flecked with gray,
And he but hearty,
For then, John Bull, the debt to pay—
He 'll give a party.

And do n't believe the idle cant—
Some superannuated aunt,
Or cousin, of your Norman slant,
Would make you think
That what we need, we long shall want
Across the drink—

The silly foplings who have shown
A shame that we have kept our own—
Americans in name alone,
Beyond the sea,
Who bend before your German throne,
A British knee.

But not the sons of iron men,
Who rose in every mountain glen,
To dare the British lion's den,
Undaunted stood :
These are the draught of some old hen—
A cackling brood.

You 're not so far beyond us though,
As you 'd believe and like to show ;
Your shining cases in a row,
Can only fold,
The things that naturally grow
From Art and gold.

We beat you, John, at all that *pays* ;
 'T is idle in these stirring days,
 To fool your time, and only raise,
 What 's old to-morrow,
 And turns your self-sufficient gaze,
 To shame and sorrow.

We 'd hardly snubbed "*Great George our King*"—
 Oh, what a song for *men* to sing !—
 When printer FRANKLIN, with the ring
 Of an old key,
 Called heaven's lightning down a string,
 Just to his knee.

Our land was young when FULTON saw
 A need, and gave that need a law,
Your long conclusions failed to draw.
 Our WHITNEY's toil,
 Beyond your ranks and vain eclat,
 Has blessed a soil.

And here, the other day, our MORSE,
 Because an engine or a horse
 Is slow—we need a lightning course,
 To tell our story—
 Took from the sky for better and worse
 Its bolts of glory.

There 's COLT s revolver—sent to grace
 A corner of your Crystal vase—
 Why—meet us John, right face to face,
 In honest quarrel,
 We 'd stir your squadrons to a race,
 With yon six barrel.

You laughed aloud, in high disdain,
At our machine that cuts the grain ;—
And swallowed down your words again,
 Conceited John,
For every rod across the plain
 The thing has gone.

We've beat you, John, at all we tried,
And though you have the fact denied,
Have seen our ocean steamers glide
 Right by your own,
To mock your song-invented pride—
 An ocean throne.

“Britannia rules the wave”—git eout—
Let every growing Yankee shout,—
Our clipper ships have made your stout
 Old tar breeks shiver,
As if the very wind would scout
 Your vain endeavor.

Old Bull, the thing a joke allows ;
We took you by the horns at *Cowes*,
And tore the laurel from your brows
 And left them bare,—
You'll have to trim both stern and bows
 To make it square.

The Yacht *America* was seen
(A compliment we really mean)
 flag before the Queen
 She never lowered
Her flag again upon the scene
 To Duke or Lord.

I've often thought, the pleasant day
You saw her slipping down the bay,
And mixing with the misty gray,
What must have been
Your mood—'t is rather hard to say,
And worse to pen.

John, since we sent you o'er the bread,
By which the starving Celt was fed,
We've rather made you droop your head ;
I would n't care
For all your pride has done and said,
If you'd be fair.

Just fairly own the busy years
Have sent more thoughts about your ears—
More lessons to your idle sneers,
To teach your mind—
Than all your famous House of Peers
Has ever signed.

Why will you sleeping folks, beyond
This scanty strip of herring pond,
Believe the feeble, shaking wand
Of admonition
Is seriously felt or conned,
From our position ?

Perhaps along the Eastern coast,
A few there are, who like to boast
Of foreign follies, but the most
Of these are knaves—
Would rob for titles, won or lost—
Their fathers' graves.

The Western giant lives and grows,
Prepared alike for friends and foes,
Too rude to heed what you propose ;
 And, what is more,
Do n't hear the silly breath that blows
 From your small shore,—

The foolish words the other day
You puckered up your lips to say, —
To stretch your arm across the bay
 In grand alliance,
And then with native pluck array
 A world's defiance.

Perhaps you only meant to share
The profit in our golden ware ;
Along the Isthmus you declare
 You have a right—
But stay your busy fingers there,
 Or breed a fight.

Aye, you must take your gouty foot
From where the seed is taking root
'That grows a tree for Yankee fruit ;
 We cannot make
Alliance that would keep us mute,
 For Freedom's sake.

And plead for this a plain excuse
That stands the test of frequent use ;
It is, that we must keep a truce
 O'er Europe's field ;
To guard the shelter no abuse
 Shall make us yield

The home for every stricken heart
That flees from trouble's busy mart;
And when we plan with subtle art
 To lose it all,
May Freedom from the earth depart
 And honor fall.

Our fathers worked, in field and town,
Their sober faces berry brown
To pull the British rulers down,
 And wisely taught
Their sons, that Nature's only crown
 Was honest thought.

They saw, in poverty and grief,
The rising tree put forth its leaf,
A prey to every prowling thief
 On Europe's shore,
And wrote their honest plain belief
 In foreign gore.

And by the sun in yonder sky,
By all our hopes to live and die
Like those who taught us how and why,
 We'll never sign
Away the thrilling rights that lie
 In Freedom's line.

The only line that ought to reign,
The farmer boy that ploughs the plain,
As noble as the thickened strain
 Of Adam's clay
That dwindles through a monarch's vein
 Its life away.

Our *princes*, wheresoe'er they grow,
In Southern swamps or Northern snow,
Must grind their points and make a show ;
 Old surly cousin
Just match your time-cemented row
 With our half-dozen.

You warm your golden egg for years—
Your Prince of Wales, whose baby tears
Are wiped away by careful peers
 And bishops holy ;
There 's not a Yankee boy, but sneers,
 At such a folly.

And yet you wish us to admire
The joke, and kindle into ire
Because you cannot coax or hire
 Us to produce,
By roasting over such a fire,
 As great a goose.

John, you may laugh at all we 'ved one,
And be as welcome to your fun,
Until we rear an old wife's son,
 To silken curtain ;
We 've shown a million's better 'n one
 For choice, that's certain.

Royalty may be well enough
For those who cannot rear the stuff,
From which—and here you 'll take a huff—
 A ruler 's made
That quick, or steady, smooth, or rough,
 'S a shining blade.

But for the Anglo-Saxon race,
To gaze a woman in the face,
And ever limping, only lace
 The tight-heeled shoe
Of rank, that 's pinching to disgrace,
 'S a queer to do.

Your clergy-burdened starving Celts ;
Your sodger crew, with tightened belts ;
Your pageants, where the money melts,
 Would feed the whole,—
Are things at which old Laughter pelts
 With all his soul.

I 've rambled on from quick to queer,
But let me pause a moment here ;
'Tis sad to mark your idle leer,
 At shame and wrong ;
And know the burning moment near,
 That moves the throng.

You 're blind to all by Kossuth done,
“ From scattered rays to form a sun,”
Nor deem the man as shrewd a one
 As ever turned
A chestnut (if you 'll spare the pun)
 Before it burned.

But when you see the bloody dance,
From Russia to the shores of France,
And, in the scuffle, take the chance
 Of striking in,
May catch the meaning at a glance,
 And hear the din.

A creature of the common mass
Has risen for his native class ;
God shield the man ! and may he pass
 Through fate and time,
To shine on glory's vivid glass,
 And live in rhyme.

But, John, we're not without our faults,
We've had our troubles, trips, and halts,
And taken many funny vaults,
 Since all's complete ;
Though one thing still the truth exalts,
 Light on our feet.

We've loved to barter, trade, and borrow,
But not to pay—the more's the sorrow—
Who ever did think on the morrow
 In liquidation ?
We turned a curious western furrow
 In annexation.

And this I'll say, and hold it well—
Of all the fiends brought out of hell,
The Devil himself just took a spell
 At legislation,
And sung bright honor's parting knell,
 Repudiation.

And down beneath the southern sun—
Around the tomb of WASHINGTON—
We've trouble, that your laws begun—
 And ours must end—
Too sore a thought for scorn or fun,
 You may depend.

You gave it to us, root and branch—
The only means by any chance,
To sever what, man, for the wants
 Of man, cemented—
A home for Freedom, free from cants,
 And ranks invented.

I've seen—upon the very sod,
Where Warren, Franklin, Adams stood—
A piebald wretch*—whose British nod,
 Would shake the spheres—
Strew Treason's ready thought abroad
 For willing ears.

John Bull, a heaven-directed power
Has planted on this western shore
A home for nations, less or more ;
 'T was once your own—
Pause, ere you stain with kindred gore
 Its broad hearth-stone.

Would, that the “whim-inspired fool,”
Who comes, without a form or rule,
To guide the heads he thinks to school
 In Treason's ways,
Might cut his fingers with the tool
 He rashly plays.

Our Constitution's holy band
(I speak the word with hat in hand),
He terms a weak, half-twisted strand,—
 A straw would break it ;
'Then comes his worship's high command,
 That we should make it.

* George Thompson.

Keep, for your own half starving hordes,
This dull debater's trick at words ;
They feel their wants ; our open boards
Have volumes told ;
Since war no longer stains your swords
You 're over bold.

Americans, the deadly shame
That lies within our borders, came
From those who mark the years with blame,
Who would not pay
A shilling to the only claim
We dare array

That lies beneath the wings of Right ;
A shadow in the calmer light
Of truth, that pleads with Nature's might
For those who toil—
Denied, will place as deep a blight
On Freedom's soil.

When fell Disunion laughs and leers,
And finer Reason doubts and fears,
Our lands, our gold, our plighted years,
The debt to meet,
To those, whose rights the vagueless sneers
Of fools, would cheat.

The fervor of a tempered zeal,
Should plan a mighty nation's weal—
The southern pride that cannot kneel
To Faction's storm,
Still nerves a heart as prone to feel,
As kindly warm.

John Bull, perchance you only deem
The thought a poet's crazy dream,—
Some burning heart may mould the scheme
Your doubts to sever,
When my poor words in Lethe's stream
Have sank for ever.

But you deny that we can boast,—
From Mississippi to the coast,—
A single bard from out a host,
Knows how to write ;
And there, by Heaven, I think you 're most
Or wholly right.

We 've some that gather, chip, and hew,
From German tales to please the few,
And some—a whining servile crew—
For bread to feed 'em ;
Not one has spoken brave and true,
For God and Freedom.

I like old PERCIVAL the best,
He rears a tattered eagle's crest,
And screams as loud, here in the West,
As he is able—
But boasts so of the present nest,
It seems a fable.

Our noble BRYANT calm and good,
Just saunters through the solemn wood,
Or gazing upwards where a brood
Of wild fowl wing it,
Betrays the power, if he 'd the mood
To mould and sing it.

Betrays the power ! the chosen cliques
Of limping rhymes on stilted sticks,
Are put to shame when BRYANT tricks
 The rules of art,
And turns the phrase of "SEVENTY-SIX"
 To fire the heart.

JOHN WHITTIER—for we 've a John,
Brave as your own old famous one—
Loads up an abolition gun,
 With quaker yeast,
When he could sing for love or fun,
 Among the best.

We 've DANA, apt in prose or verse
Some clever meaning to rehearse ;
Although he could a horse immerse
 In plain sea water,
Then send him forth a stalking curse,
 To end the matter.

He paints the "black duck's glossy breast"
When silent seas sink slow to rest,
Or gathered wild with mountain crest,
 Along the strand,
He points the line with poet's zest,
 And Nature's hand.

We 've modest, honest, able HOLMES,
Whose chastened fancy never roams.
Our native flag, our joys, our homes,
 His changes ring,
While ready-footed Laughter comes
 To hear him sing.

To Scottish Burns, we 've HALLECK's song.
 Ye have not in your boasted throng,
 A man that 's hammered clear and strong,
 So near the story,
 Or sings the darling minstrel's wrong
 With half the glory.

We 've GEORGE P. MORRIS—I 'm for those
 Within whose shell a *kernel* grows—
 I feel the critics on my toes,
 But I 'm prepared;
 When heart-felt thought to music flows,
 The man 's a bard.

NAT WILLIS, too (Nat needs his friends ;
 Health to thee, lad ! here 's one who sends
 A greeting), if he rather tends
 True taste to dim,
 His "AFTERNOON" and "BROADWAY" ends
 All doubts of him.

RALPH HOYT, I think, has honest claim
 To shake his careful hand with fame ;
 Your poem "OLD" will stamp your name,
 Queer bardie brother—
 So warm your thoughts, and fan the flame—
 Your "SNOW" another !

Our LOWELL sprinkles dewy sweets
 O'er every song his muse repeats,
 But then there 's something tells of KEATS,
 And oft a line
 The thought in soft expression meets,
 To give the sign.

His humor, though—if badly framed
To “I’ll be darned,” and “I’ll be blamed,”
Is native, and I’m half ashamed
Of what I’ve said ;
But after all, the arrow’s aimed
Without a head.

Our BOKER, if he flags in rhyme,
Has strown the Drama’s measured chime
With beauty from the olden time—
A spirit dream
That murmured through the flowery thime,
On Avon’s stream.

There’s something that is really fine
In STODDARD, and with true design
He waits till Feeling gives the sign,
Then strikes the lyre,
And fills the music of the line
With Nature’s fire.

And we’ve another in the North
Who keeps with *Sacks* of Fun and Mirth,
The “pith o’ sense and pride o’ worth,”
For daily use.
Joy rest about his honest hearth
And cheer the muse !

With others, who are more than these
To those whom they may chance to please,
I cannot bend the oily knees
Of adulation,
And what I’ve named just fairly frees
My admiration.

Thou pleasant one, whose "PSALM OF LIFE"
 Stirs up the soul with drum and fife,
 Why wilt thou war with secret knife
 On foreign tome ?
 Thy native land with song is rife,—
 Why scorn thy home ?

I cannot think a meaning sought
 From out the treasured stores of thought,
 By other minds divinely wrought,
 An honest claim ;
 Believe, my friend, you've only caught
 A glimpse at Fame.

The polished lesson to the mind—
 Continued effort long confined—
 Like gloomy YOUNG'S or MILTON'S blind,
 We do not need.
 The words would whistle down the wind,
 With none to read.

Nay, rather let the music flow,
 As jinks the fiddle to the bow,
 And living words of beauty grow
 To watch the sound
 Of melodies, for high and low
 The crowd have found.

Our hope must be some ready BURNS,
 Whose witty, "song-inspired turns,"
 To fun, or fame, the farmer learns
 To sing at plough.
 The thought bestowed on patent churns,
 To gild a brow—

To hold communion with the forms
Invisible, when passion storms
The heart, or love like lightning warms
 The youthful vein;
Or startling grief awakes and arms
 “The moving strain.”

But thrifty Yankees do not sit
To muse the silly rhyming fit;
Men on this shore, whose mother wit
 Like lightning plays,
Must find the meat or turn the spit
 Before its blaze.

We have a poet—FREMONT'S name
Is worthy of that holy claim;
Wrung from the faltering lips of fame,
 Half earth accords,
A truth that mocks the rhyming game—
 That deeds are words!

Our WEBSTER oft a phrase sublimes,
To shame the idle clink of rhymes;
'T was said, he loved the clink of dimes,—
 There 's naught to show it;
His name is booked for after times,
 And he 's a poet.

“The man 's a man,” and what is more,
His deepest love 's his native shore—
The lesson traced in British gore,
 On Bunker's height,
He deems the surest silver store,
 And rubs it bright.

A living poem of the heart,
To shame the silly subtle art
Of matching words—a nobler part
 From which he gains
The lightnings of the truth to dart
 Through Faction's veins.

Would that our union's starry beam
Might brighten every poet's dream,—
A nobler thought, a truer scheme,
 There never was ;
If I have wandered from my theme,
 I plead the cause.

John Bull, I've made this nick at life,
To show our native land is rife
With thought, embodied in a strife
 That mocks your own
Unmeaning gaze at "Albert's wife,"
 Stuck on a throne.

I might deny your solemn pate
Its judgment, and, with front elate,
Cry out, "our native bards are great"—
 'T would be a lie ;
And so I've taken pains to state
 The reason why.

Because our bravest and our best,
Are but the servants of the rest.
And though, within our spacious nest,
 There 's stuff enough to do it,
Our folks will not the stock invest,
 To raise a poet.

Lives there an honest, earnest man,
True at the heart, with brain to scan
The future, and with power to fan

Poetic fire,—

We need his stirring thoughts to plan
For something higher.

Again, our native land affords
No famous line of haughty lords,
To foster Art with golden hoards—

God shield the chance !

We raise our pumpkins, corn, and gourds,
Our needs are wants.

And thus we spread with wholesome fare
The board your starving millions share—
The food your funny tricks ca n't spare,

With all your ranks—

'T is something, if it dont compare
With your old pranks.

When we grow older on the coast
'T will puzzle you to keep your boast,
For only look at what a cost

Of blood and treasure,

You've reared the things, we've done the most,
Or at our leisure.

We fail for sentimental graces,
And oft you've flung it in our faces,—
Do all your sheltered nooks and places,

Your sunny hours,

Your ranks, your ribbons, stars and laces,
Show up one POWERS ?

Old Father Bull, here let me pause—
There—take my hand for true applause—
That fostered for one honest cause,
Your rank still linger,
Or points, some silly fool that awes,
Its silly finger.

To you, if honest merit come—
Denied at home a single crumb—
By those who beat the sounding drum,
“OLD WORLD ABUSES.”
No wretch can steal beneath its thumb,
The hard won muses.

So cock your old red nose and sneer—
It scarcely hides your wholesome fear,
And what you've seen from year to year,
May well alarm ye;
But feed your lords, and drink your beer—
We'll never harm ye!

And John, remember, once for all,
The highest horse may trip and fall—
The hour may come, ye'll need to call
For Jonathan.
He cut away when he was small,
But he's your son.

Young Nutmegs well can hold his own
He may, at your old crazy throne,
For fun or frolic, shy a stone,
With boyish laughter,
But “foreign randie, tip the scone,”
And see who's after.

When the half-conscious hireling troop,
That gather round your ancient coop,
May need some sticking in the croop,
Or shake their ears,
Just clear the track and hear the whoop
Of volunteers.

We are not trained to back and fill
By any perfect rules of drill—
Like your old squads at Bunker's hill—
In stated fashion,
But each wild heart holds one good gill
Of Yankee passion.

Good-bye! old John; and boys, come round,
Just join your hands, and take your ground,
Now, shake old ocean with the sound—
Three mighty cheers,
The same old heart, and may it bound
This thousand years!





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